

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please **AMEND** claim 15.

Please **CANCEL** claims 1 – 14 and 20 – 27.

A copy of all pending claims and a status of the claims are provided below.

1. – 14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A method for generating kerf data, the method comprising the steps of:

executing design manipulation utilities for at least chip data design manipulation;

creating a kerf design build utilities file by assembling kerf features previously designed and stored in a library of kerf design data as a result of kerf data manipulation; ~~and~~

creating and manipulating kerf design data concurrently with chip data design manipulation processing by using same parameters in the kerf design data manipulation and chip data design manipulation thereby ensuring that the kerf design data and the chip design data are consistent; and

following successful completion of the creating and manipulation step, submitting the kerf design data to validation checks to ensure that a combination of a kerf design grid and a chip design grid prevents grid snapping at a mask write tool.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein in the creating and manipulating step the design data includes one of shrinks, expands and derivation of new data levels.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein in the creating and manipulating step includes processing assist features for device enhancements and addition of nonfunctional shapes for increased manufacturing line process latitude.

18. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein after successful completion of the chip data design manipulation processing, at least one of a chip design image and modified design data is archived in a chip design data repository.

19. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the creating kerf design data uses information associated with at least one of the chip data and a mask order for the chip, and the information is obtained from a previously created file thereby minimizing user inputs and reducing errors.

20. – 27. (Canceled)